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AFRL honors top contributions during 4th annual awards banquet

by Jill Bohn, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT PATTERSON, AFB — The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) honored their best as the top enlisted airmen and officer received awards for their contributions and accomplishments at the 4th annual awards banquet held Feb. 28 at the Hope Hotel.

Awards were presented to Airman, Non-Commissioned Officer, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer, and Company Grade Officer of the Year.

Guest speaker for the ceremony, Retired Chief Master Sergeant Sam E. Parish, took time to reflect on strides made by the Air Force during the course of its history. Serving as Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force from August 1983 to June 1986, Chief Parish was the advisor to Air Force Chief of Staff General Charles A. Gabriel on matters concerning welfare, and effective utilization and progress of the enlisted Air Force. Chief Parish retired in 1986 after a nearly 32-year career in the Air Force.

He described today's Air Force as "the most educated, dedicated and disciplined military force that any nation could hope to have; a force that has to worry about the wrong things and gets bogged down in political correctness, and a force that can absolutely be counted on when the chips are down."

"For you, tonight cultivates a very exciting time and it will be remembered by each of you for a long time, maybe some of you for the rest of your life," Chief Parish said to the nominees. "Each of you did a superb job to get where you are and you're being recognized for taking that extra step, for going that extra mile, for being a winner."

Airman of the Year

The award for Outstanding Airman was presented to Senior Airman Jason W. Brock, a research machinist and welder from the Propulsion Directorate, Edwards AFB, Calif.

Brock was credited as being instrumental in manufacturing components for a \$9 million hybrid rocket motor program. He manufactured a special fitting to replace a commercial fitting that had been failing every 200 hours. His in-house manufactured part has now been installed for over 14,600 hours without a single failure.

He graduated from Airmen Leadership School in July as a distinguished graduate and winner of the Leadership award. He has been assigned to the Propulsion Directorate West at Edwards AFB since February 1998.

Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year

Tech. Sergeant Billy J. Pike, Directed Energy Directorate, Kirtland AFB, N.M., was selected as the Outstanding Non-Com-



Senior Airman
Jason W. Brock



Tech. Sgt.
Billy J. Pike



Msgt. Sgt.
Bruce W. Hamilton



Captain
Amanda S. Birch

missioned Officer of the year. In the year 2000, Pike was handpicked to brief and demonstrate the capabilities in space weapon system development to Air Force Chief of Staff General Ryan, AFRL Commander Brig. Gen. Nielsen, and Air Armament Center Commander Maj. Gen. Kostelnik.

In addition, he was able to demonstrate daytime satellite laser illumination, the first time daytime illumination was confirmed.

He serves as Vice President of the Phillips Research Site Enlisted Association and as a deacon and Sunday school teacher at his local church. Sgt. Pike was assigned to the Phillips Research Site in January 1995.

Senior-Non Commissioned Officer of the Year

Outstanding Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year was presented to Master Sgt. Bruce W. Hamilton from the Directed Energy Directorate, Kirtland AFB. As the Superintendent of the Starfire Optical Range, he directed the upgrade of the new Laser Safety Officer Station in only six days.

Active in his local Boy Scout troop as a merit badge

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counselor and Eagle Scout Guide, he also serves in his local church as a lay minister and adult Sunday school teacher. Master Sgt. Hamilton has been assigned to the Propulsion Directorate West since 1994.

Company Grade Officer of the Year

The Outstanding Company Grade Officer of the Year was awarded to Capt. Amanda S. Birch, formerly of the Munitions Directorate, Eglin AFB, Florida. Birch served as the executive officer and section commander to the Munition's Director, managing over 450 personnel and monitoring the unit's \$120 million annual budget. She used her skills as a mechanical development engineer to detect, track and kill targets obscured by cluttered environments.

She served the local community by tripling the number of teams involved in church activities while serving as her church's youth director. Assigned to the Munitions Directorate at Eglin AFB since April 1998, she is currently assigned to Elmendorf, Alaska.

CMSgt. Jim Agnew, First Sergeant for AFRL/HQ and CMSgt. Bob Clougherty, Chief of Security for the DE Directorate served as masters of ceremony for the event. @